

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



VOLUME VIII No. 1

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Rutland Historical Society, 101 Center Street, Rutland, Vermont

The Society publishes the *Quarterly* for its members with the aim of preserving and studying the history of the Rutland community, which comprises the towns of West Rutland, Rutland, Proctor and the City of Rutland. The Society maintains and operates a museum at 101 Center Street, Rutland in the former Bank of Rutland building (built in 1825), now owned by the City of Rutland and leased to the Society at no charge.

Editor: F. P. Elwert and Norman Cohen.

Membership

Membership in the Society is open to all upon payment of dues to the Assistant Treasurer—

John Diodati, 16 Cottage Street, Rutland, Vermont 05701.

Dues are \$2.00 per year for regular members; for those wishing to give the Society further support, a contributing membership is \$10.00; a life membership (one payment only) is \$75.00; and a sustaining membership is \$100.00.

Because of ever increasing costs, the Society does not issue membership cards. Instead, all members receive as part of their membership four issues of the *Quarterly*. The expiration date of each membership is listed on the mailing label of the publication. Members wishing to pay two or more years' dues in advance are encouraged to do so to reduce costs.

Our neighbor, the Shrewsbury Historical Society, would be delighted to receive papers, photos and other materials pertaining to Shrewsbury. Contact Ann Spencer, Cuttingsville.

The Cover

The Royce house at 21 Merchants Row as it appeared during its last days as a private home. Watercolor, gift of Helen Royce Dutton.

Book Notes

UNDERWOOD, FRANCIS H. *The Colonial House Then and Now*. Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1977. 172 pp. illustrated. \$17.50.

The recently rekindled interest in reducing heating costs is certain to spark debate about which style house is best suited to heating with wood. The Tuttle Co. has recently issued a book praising the quaintness and charm of the colonial house.

Of necessity, such a house was built to last. It was well insulated (sometimes with vertical planks and double plastered walls). A minimum of the building's surface was exposed to elements; that is, the ratio of surface area to cubic contents of the interior was as low as possible. This was accomplished by designing the house in a rectangular form with few projecting eels. Ceilings were low and windows were small. We are speaking of the colonial house built before independence, when lumber was sawn by hand or by water power and when glass was expensive.

The colonial home, whenever built, should be recognized as an honest answer to the problems of the home builder faced with scarce materials other than abundant wood, that versatile, natural renewable resource.

Palladio

Report: Rutland Picture Book

The committee working on the picture book is meeting three times weekly. We understand parts of the book are already at the printer. Earliest possible delivery date is lilac time.

Reopening

The museum will reopen for the season on Saturday, May 27, 1978 with hours from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. every day except Monday until September 3. From September 3 until October 15, 1978 the museum will be open weekends from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.



85 Park Avenue. Cyrus Johnson Smith owner. Interior remodeled into ten apartments, exterior embellished with porch railing and fence in keeping with style of building.



41 Cottage Street. The next in the string of houses owned by Smith to be renovated.

RUTLAND RESTORATIONS

During the past year, the Historical Preservation Project of the Downtown Development Corporation went into full swing. Under this federally sponsored program, a variety of rejuvenation projects, notably those on the Baptist Church, the Masonic Lodge, City Hall and the former Montgomery Ward building were completed. We are happy to report that at the last hour, the museum building of the Society was enrolled under this project, thanks to the special efforts of Mayor Gilbert Godnick. The brickwork on the gables was completely dismantled and re-laid; all defective joints were repointed, the windows caulked, trim painted, a sagging support beam was braced and the creaky covered fire escape has been removed.

Reported here for the first time are a few of the many non-subsidized renovation jobs carried out in the Bicentennial years. The Lawrence house at 17 Washington Street has been restored to its former dignity by the Kohlhepps. A thorough renovation of the brick, roof and wooden trim of the K of C building at 21 Merchants Row, has brought the former Royce House (George Edmund Royce) to life again. At 85 Park Avenue, a run-down place was purchased by Cyrus Johnson Smith of Pittsfield, Vermont. In the Smith string of houses are 125 Park Avenue, 30 Washington Street, and 41 Cottage Street, the latter being in an advanced stage of decay. Rehabilitation will be extensive and the building may not resemble its original self again.

The cases cited above are the dramatic ones—obvious to the eye because of the dramatic change effected by a thorough overhaul. Less obvious, but even more important, are those buildings which over the years have received periodic, systematic and painstaking maintenance. We could cite dozens of examples but their location is obvious.



The Knights of Columbus building restored on exterior to its elegance when it was the residence of George Edmund Royce.

On the Society's Bookshelves

Nestled among the more than one thousand acquisitions the Society has received since its founding are copies of the most universal book ever published—the Bible. The Society does not actively acquire Bibles the way it would seek out an early report of Rutland Town or an old telephone directory. Nevertheless, we have accumulated several Bibles of particular interest. The value of a Bible to an historical society is what might or might not be found on the blank pages between the Old and the New Testaments. Here, thoughtful publishers left blank spaces for the family to record the milestones in the life of its members—the births, marriages and deaths. Occasionally, a Bible devoid of genealogical information will be of interest if it unveils an aspect of the owner's life.

The age of a Bible is by no means a guide to its value. For example, the oldest Bible owned by the Society is also the least valuable. It is a well-worn copy published in London in 1712. Severely limiting its value is its poor condition, including missing title pages to the two testaments. Evidence of the age of the book is given by two notations, one in pencil, the other in ink, stating that the book was published in 1712, obviously noted before the book lost its title pages. Referring to A. S. Herbert's "Historical Catalogue of Printed Editions of the English Bible 1525-1961" we find that in 1712 there were printed no less than nine editions of the Bible and our copy is one of the 917 separate English language editions since Tyndale's English translation was printed in Cologne in 1525. Our copy has but one blank page for family records and the earliest recorded date is the birth of Ethan Larned on August 22, 1784. We suspect the book has more interest to some museum in the Bethel area and one day a transfer may be arranged for the appropriate society.

Our next oldest Bible comes from an unexpected place. It is a new testament translated into Italian by the Archbishop of Florence and was printed in Paris in 1823. It stands on our shelves because it bears in three places (bookplate, signature and printed name) evidence of its former owner, United States Senator Solomon Foot. Despite his high office (president of the U.S. Senate) at the time of his untimely death in 1866, we know very little about Foot as a person. Certainly we had no reason to believe he could read Italian but perhaps we are presumptuous. This fat little devotional book, together with a large lithographic portrait of the Senator and a horse-hair chair from his house, are the only mementos left of the esteemed senator.

Three other Bibles in our collection were part of the millions of Bibles published by the American Bible Society. Ours are dated 1841, an octavo set in small Pica type; 1842, a duodecimo set in eye-boggling 5 point Pearl; and 1879, a quarto set in Minion. These three trace their lineage back to the first ABS edition in this country in 1816. It was in 1816 that the first Bible was printed in America using the stereotype process, where the printing is done from plates rather than set type. This technological breakthrough caused a deluge of printing, especially Bibles. None of these Bibles has significant genealogical entries.

A cousin to the above three Bibles is a Polyglott Bible printed in New York City by Robinson, Pratt & Co. in 1801. This book traces its lineage to the first printing of the Polyglott Bible in London, so called because it was issued in many languages. This Bible is rich in family history of the Farmer family, containing four pages of manuscript notations with many loose clippings and notes laid in.

Unquestionably, the rarest devotional work on our shelves is a New Testament that few in Rutland can translate and which reads from back to front. It is a Chinese New Testament printed in Shanghai in 1873 by the Presbyterian Mission Press. The Bible was brought to Rutland by Chu Yaw who inscribed on the blank page facing the title page "June 6th, 1879. Chu Yaw, Oakland, Cal. Please not take away from him. Amen." The book passed along to Sam Lung who operated a laundry on 61 Center Street as early as 1887 (see the *Quarterly*, Fall 1971, back page) and whose photograph is laid in our Bible. The photo and Bible are the gifts of Amy Perkins, whose grandfather received them from Sam Lung 80 years ago.

Newly Elected Officers

At the annual business meeting of the Society in the Nella Grimm Fox Room of the Rutland Free Library, held October 17, 1977, the following officers and directors were elected:

President: Robert E. West of Rutland City
Vice President: Carmine A. Pacca of Rutland City
Secretary: Jean Ross of Rutland City
Treasurer: George J. Covalt of West Rutland
Directors to serve two years:

Eleanor D. Douglas, A. J. Todd, F. P. Elwert

Rutland Scribes

The Society is always delighted to acquire privately printed books and pamphlets written by Rutlanders. When we learn of such a work we rush to secure a copy.

Quite a few such elusive items are now on the Society's bookshelves. Three recently received are related to the "French" church, Immaculate Heart of Mary. One is a history of the parish written by the indefatigable Father Patrick T. Hannon who has compiled eight parish histories. Sister Jean Polworth of the Religious Instruction Office at IHM has donated a special parish hymnal combining songs of the Monks of Weston Priory with those composed by Sister Jean. Also by Sister Jean is a devotional book "Dried Flowers and Spices."

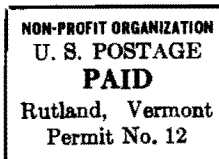
From one of our members, Beverly Seward, comes selections of her cross-word puzzles published in the New York Times. Not too frequently does a Rutlander get a by-line in that paper.

Part of a gift of the Rutland Free Library is a fairly complete collection of the work of Edith Kellog Dunton who, under her own name, was published in "Atlantic Monthly" and under her pen name, Margaret Warde, submitted girl's stories and articles for children's magazines. Included in her collection are manuscripts and clippings.

Thanks to the Library

Recently, the Society received from the Trustees of the Rutland Free Library material uncovered in an upper floor storeroom. Among the articles gratefully acknowledged by the Society are maps of Rutland and vicinity, programs of many Rutland Woman's Clubs, genealogical magazines and clippings, photographs and framed pictures. Lynn Traina Gould, our curator, is busy cataloging this most welcome gift.

RUTLAND
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SOCIETY
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The number or letter on the address label indicates your dues status:

77 one year in arrears
78 current
L life membership